

LABOR ARISTOCRATS

The history of the development of society is, at the same time, a history of conflict between two social classes, namely an exploiting class, and a working class. The noble lord has the peasant, the national bourgeois has the proletarian. The cosmopolitan bourgeois, on the other hand, has the labor aristocrat.

Generally, the nobility finds its basis in rural landownership, particularly in leasing farmland to agricultural laborers. The national bourgeoisie finds its material basis in the industrialist class, in large-scale urban factories worked by industrial laborers, proletarians. The cosmopolitan bourgeoisie finds its basis in finance capital, which reaps profits amounting to several times that of the industrialist, and who ultimately have the power to completely subordinate national industry to the large banking institutions.

There are exceptions, but these are the general trends.

What, then, sets the labor aristocrat apart from the proletarian? The labor aristocrat serves not the national bourgeoisie, but the cosmopolitan bourgeoisie. In essence, the labor aristocrat is a proletarian who benefits from capitalism, rather than losing from it.

The proletariat works for the national bourgeoisie, who live on the proletariat's labor and return to them only a meager wage. The proletariat is stifled, oppressed, for they labor day in, day out in the churning factories, risking life and limb, with nothing to show for it but nickels.

The labor aristocracy works for the cosmopolitan bourgeoisie, who reap billions from the imperialized peoples of the world and use those billions to satisfy their own masses. Whereas the labor aristocrat is still formally "exploited", in that they work for a wage, with the fruits of their labor being appropriated by the capitalist, their quality of life is several times better than that of the actual imperialized proletariat; in fact, the misery of the imperialized proletariat is directly proportionate to the comfort of the imperial labor aristocracy.

The workers of the imperialized nations are herded into pharmaceutical factories without protective equipment, where they work amidst intoxicating, perhaps lethal fumes for fourteen to fifteen hours, in return for a five or six dollar wage. Meanwhile, the American factory worker undertakes the arduous labor of bottling these chemicals and putting labels on them for a wage of some \$20 an hour, and sends it to the drug store clerk, who, after stacking these medicines on a shelf for 8 hours, demands that his \$7.50 is not enough for an hour's work.

It is from here that the political consciousness of the labor aristocracy arises: ultimately, the ideology of the labor aristocracy is that of social-democracy, of an imperialist 'socialism' – fair distribution of the plundered goods from abroad.

Where, in the American worker's demands of free healthcare and a higher minimum wage, is the clause to return the stolen billions to the factory laborers of Pakistan and the Congo? There is no such clause in their demand. What appears on the surface, formally, as a revolutionary demand is, actually, entirely bourgeois, and serves the cause of global imperialism.

The consciousness – not just political, but the overall social consciousness – of the labor aristocracy is one of constant decay, cultural degeneration, loathing for work, utopianism, trade unionism, and ultimately, imperialism. It is a bourgeois consciousness in proletarian guise.

The bourgeois consciousness of the labor aristocrat arises as a distinct reflection of his material relation with the workers of the imperialized nations; the proletarian lives by his own labor, while the bourgeois lives on the proletarian's labor. But the cosmopolitan bourgeoisie lives on both the foreign proletariat *and* the foreign bourgeoisie, and so too does the labor aristocracy. Let us discard all notions of class for a moment, and see it only as an international relation – that is, let's say there is a proletariat and a bourgeoisie, and they exist in Nation A, and there is another proletariat and bourgeoisie that constitute a Nation B. In the context of imperialism, Nation A lives off of Nation B in the *exact same manner* as the two bourgeoisies live off the proletariat in both Nations A *and* B.

Thus, the proletariat of nation A is not really a proletariat, but a bourgeois-proletariat, a proletariat that exists also as a bourgeoisie. Hence, the proletariat of nation A possesses a bourgeois consciousness, a bourgeois concept of social life, and even fights against proletarian socialism in the name of liberalism, of bourgeois capitalism

Though we won't explore it here, there is, reflexively, the existence of a bourgeoisie with a revolutionary proletarian consciousness in those nations oppressed by international capital.

What, then, are we to do with the labor aristocracy? As a movement of the international working class, are we to follow the labor aristocracy, advocate for its supremacy and its interests, and work to advance its political and economic demands?

No, of course not, for to do so is tantamount to an explicit stand in defense of imperialism, of global exploitation. To advance the economic and political demands of the labor aristocracy is, ultimately, indistinguishable from directly advancing the economic and political demands of the national bourgeoisie against the proletariat.

The first step in the genuine political education of the labor aristocracy is, first and foremost, to pry it from the claws of international capital. The only manner by which this is possible is to strain the cosmopolitan bourgeoisie's ability to adequately satisfy the material interests of the labor aristocracy, and this too, in turn, is only possible with the development of more and more mouths to feed. Thus, the only logical offensive by which to loosen the cosmopolitan class's grasp on the industrial working class in imperialist nations is that of a two-pronged attack: first, the continuous production of as many mouths to feed as possible, that is to say, the program of a

revolutionary party in an imperialist nation should be the encouragement of a healthy family and the highest possible rate of reproduction. Naturally, this implies as well the political education of the children involved. Secondly, the unfettered development of capitalism is an absolute necessity in the transformation of the imperialist labor aristocracy into a genuine proletarian class, for ultimately things may only trend one of two ways:

Either we advance the aims of the labor aristocracy, slow down the development of capitalism, and help further transform the working class from an industrial proletariat into a labor aristocracy, which implies the intensification of imperialism, degeneration in the consciousness of the broad masses of people, and the obfuscation of class struggle, or;

We directly oppose the demands of the labor aristocracy and encourage directly the massive development of free-market industrial capitalism, which implies the increased strain of the cosmopolitan bourgeoisie, and, though still likely implying the intensification of imperialism, implies such in a way that serves *only the bourgeoisie*, thus driving the labor aristocracy into direct contradiction with them, converting their consciousnesses from that of a bourgeois, to a proletarian consciousness, and intensifying the class struggle.

From there, the course of action should be obvious.

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